

**REMARKS:**

In the Office Action dated December 16, 2005, the Examiner objected to the drawings as not disclosing the friction reducing coating of Claims 10 and 30. Applicants have amended the claims to change “layer” to “coating” and so that same reads: “one of said lower surface of the rig base and said rig support surface further comprises a friction-reducing coating.” Applicants respectfully submit that the coating is described in the specification on Page 14, lines 10-25 (Paragraphs [0056] and [0057] of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0200641). Applicants further submit that the amendment is supported in the specification on Page 18, lines 21-24 (Paragraph [0073]) which states :

The rig support surface [3] of the pad [1] and/or the bottom surface of the rig structure [6], being the rig base [2], would be of proper materials to provide for a low friction relationship which would simplify the movement of the rig structure [6] and the rig base [2] across the rig support surface [3] of the pad [1]

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 21, 27, 29, and 37 based on perceived informalities in those claims. Applicants have made the requested amendments except as follows:

- In Claim 27, Applicants have amended the claim to delete the phrase “said connectable portions adapted to be connected to form said pad, or disconnected for transport”;
- In Claim 29, the Examiner requested that “a first drilling location” and a “second drilling location” be changed respectively to read: “a first adjacent drilling location” and a “second adjacent drilling location.” Applicants are unable to determine what the drilling locations are “adjacent to,” and therefore have not made the requested amendments. Applicants would welcome further clarification.

- In Claim 37, the Examiner requested that “a drilling location aperture” be changed to read: “the at least one drilling aperture” and a “second adjacent drilling location.” Applicants instead have amended the claim to change “at least one” to “a plurality of” drilling location apertures.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 – 3, 14 – 21, 27 – 29, 34, 35, and 37 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Springett et al. In response, Applicants have amended the claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that Springett et al. does not disclose the following underlined elements of Claim 1 as amended:

“a rig structure including a surface-engaging tool, said rig structure having a rig base with a substantially planar lower surface

.....and wherein the lower surface of the rig base rests on said rig support surface

and wherein said rig structure can be moved fore and aft and left and right and can be moved from said first position to a second position in alignment with a second drilling location aperture such that said surface-engaging tool can pass through said second drilling location aperture and access a second drilling location coinciding therewith by sliding said rig base horizontally across said rig support surface from said first position to said second position”

Applicants respectfully submit that Springett et al. does not disclose the following underlined elements of Claim 29 as amended:

“a rig base adapted for attachment to a bottom of the rig structure and having a substantially planar lower surface;

.....and the rig structure can be attached to the rig base with the lower surface of the rig base resting on said pad.....;

and wherein said rig structure attached to the rig base can be moved fore and aft and left and right and can be moved from said first position to a second position in alignment with a second drilling location aperture such that said surface-engaging tool can pass through a drilling location aperture and access a second drilling location coinciding therewith, by

sliding the rig base horizontally across said rig support surface from said first position to said second position.”

Applicants respectfully submit that Springett et al. does not disclose the following underlined elements of Claim 37 as amended:

“placing a substantially planar lower surface of a rig structure on said rig support surface, said rig structure including a surface-engaging tool;

sliding said rig structure horizontally fore and aft and right and left across said rig support surface as required until said rig structure is aligned with a selected drilling location aperture coinciding with a desired drilling location such that the surface-engaging tool can access the desired drilling location through said selected drilling location aperture.”

In the Springett system, a skid base is moved from the jack-up rig onto the fixed platform. The skid base is supported on skid-off feet that are transversely movable with respect to the skid base; the skid-off feet are moved into alignment with cantilever beams on the fixed platform and the skid base slides from the jack-up rig onto the fixed platform. Once the skid base is on the fixed platform, the jack-up rig is raised so that the drill floor package is aligned and can be skidded onto the top of the skid base. The operation is described at column 6, line 32 to column 7, line 21.

Thus, like the present invention, the Springett system includes a drilling rig supported on a base. The skid base of Springett, described in detail beginning at column 19, line 34, however, is very different than the base of the present invention.

Springett et al. states at column 7, line 34 to column 8, line 7:

The current invention also presents a novel skid base that is adapted to support a drilling structure upon the fixed platform. The skid base has an upper surface that receives the drill floor package, and a lower surface that is wide enough to be supported upon sets of feet on both the capping beams and cantilever beams. In addition, the skid base mounts a plurality of foot assemblies that are disposed vertically below the skid base and that are transversely adjustable along the underside of the skid base to be aligned with a

supporting beam. This also permits the feet to synchronously move the skid base with respect to the capping beams.

In another form, the skid base also includes two distinct sets of feet, namely, the capping beam feet, which carry the skid base only upon the capping beams of the fixed platform, and the skid-off feet, which carry the skid base only upon the cantilever beams of the jack-up rig. The capping beam feet are used to move the skid base longitudinally, using the capping beams as rails.

Finally, the capping beam feet and the aft pair of skid-off feet described herein each include a novel walking mechanism for moving the skid base along the capping beams and the cantilever beams, respectively. Each walking mechanism includes spaced fore and aft outer legs which extend downwardly to rest up on the associated capping beam or cantilever beam, thereby supporting the weight of the skid base upon it. The walking mechanism includes a center leg which is alternately raised and lowered with respect to the outer legs by an elevating and lowering mechanism, so that the outer legs and the center leg alternately support the skid base on the underlying one of the beams. Each time the outer legs and the skid base are raised from the beam by the center leg being lowered onto it, a horizontal jack creates longitudinal movement between the raised outer legs and the lowered center leg via an interposed set of horizontally mounted longitudinal movement rollers. The skid base is thereby moved in the desired fore or aft direction along the beams. When the outer legs are lowered thereby raising the center leg from the beam, the horizontal jack is operated in the opposite direction to reset the walking mechanism for the next step.

Thus, the base of Springett et al. has walking feet on the bottom thereof, contrary to the substantially planar lower surface of the rig base of the present invention.

Springett describes the operation to locate the derrick at the desired location at column 30, lines 17 to 27:

Once a desired drilling position 13 has been determined, the skid base 27 is moved in the fore and aft directions as appropriate to align the skid base longitudinally with the desired drilling position 45. The derrick 31 is then moved in the transverse direction to a position overlying the desired drilling position. As previously indicated, this movement may be accomplished by movement of the skid base 27, using the sliding mountings 63 of the capping beam feet. Preferably, however, the drill floor substructure 33 is skidded transversely upon the upper rails 79.

Thus, in the preferred embodiment of Springett et al., the drill floor substructure is moved laterally across the top of the skid base. Alternatively, the sliding feet foot structure must be

used to walk the skid base laterally.

Springett states at column 6 lines 6 to 9:

Also, the present system may be used with nearly any configuration of fixed platform, notwithstanding the capping beam configuration or the existence of decking.

This system then includes a skid base that must be adaptable to various configurations of fixed platforms, and must transfer the weight of the drill floor substructure carefully onto available capping beams of the fixed platform in use. Springett et al. does not, as in the present invention, provide both the platform, in the form of the pad, and the base so that the pad and base can be configured with a lower planar surface of the base able to slide fore and aft or right and left on the planar face of the pad as required to locate the drilling rig in the desired location.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the disclosure of Springett et al. does not anticipate the amended claims, and respectfully requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn with respect to the amended claims.

The Examiner also rejected Claims 4-13, 30 – 33, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Springett et al. in view of Rivera. The Examiner rejected Claims 22-26 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Springett et al. in view of Mochizuki et al. The Examiner rejected Claim 39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Springett et al. in view of Mochizuki et al. and further in view of Rivera.

Applicants respectfully submit that as the amended independent claims are not anticipated by Springett et al., the dependent claims are not rendered obvious by Springett et al. in combination with the other cited prior art references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections also be withdrawn.

Further with respect to Rivera, Applicants respectfully submit that Rivera does not teach the

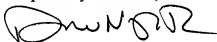
problem addressed by the present invention, or its source. The Abstract of Rivera states the invention to be:

An overlay for a elevator guide rail extends over the joints between segments to provide a seamless engagement surface for the guide rail. The overlay separates the engagement surface from the joints between adjacent segments to minimize vibration and improve the comfort of the ride.

There is no suggestion that any heavy weight could be moved about on a surface by providing a friction reducing coating between the weight and the surface.

Applicants have made an earnest effort to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections and believes that Claims 1 – 39, as amended herein, are in condition for allowance. If, however, the Examiner should for any reason consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, she is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Respectfully submitted,



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